

Rising Above

Resilience and Recovery Among Western North Carolina Nonprofits After Hurricane Helene

Dogwood Health Trust partnered with WNC Nonprofit Pathways to survey 251 nonprofit leaders across Western North Carolina about impacts and recovery from Hurricane Helene, the effects of recent federal shifts, and their current needs.

Scan to read
the full report



Short-Term Impacts of Hurricane Helene



Nearly 60% of nonprofits surveyed sustained property damage totaling over \$100 million.



Over 50% of nonprofits provided frontline response in the wake of the storm.



Nonprofit staff and volunteers experienced the hurricane's impacts alongside their communities.

“

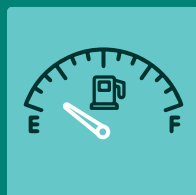
We ended up delivering nearly 10,000 boxes of shelf-stable milk by truck, 4-wheeler, and hand-carried several cases to areas with little or no refrigeration.”

Executive Director in Yancey County

Recovery Progress



76% of nonprofits have received recovery aid.



49% of nonprofit leaders said that limited staff capacity and burnout are top barriers to organizational recovery.



Many nonprofits are adding disaster recovery and community resilience into their work for the long term.



52% of nonprofits are still critically short of operating funds.

“

Almost nine months post-storm, many of the leaders I know that have been deeply involved in disaster recovery efforts at some level are dealing with pretty significant burnout.”

Executive Director in Buncombe County



El huracán Helene puso a prueba nuestra capacidad como organización, pero también demostró la fuerza y la solidaridad de nuestra comunidad.

A pesar del dolor y las pérdidas materiales, vimos cómo vecinos, voluntarios y organizaciones se unieron para apoyar a las familias más afectadas."

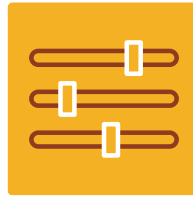
Executive Director
in Transylvania County

"Hurricane Helene tested our capacity as an organization, but it also revealed the strength and solidarity of our community. Despite the pain and material losses, we witnessed neighbors, volunteers, and organizations come together to support the families most affected."



Impacts of Federal Shifts

This information highlights how federal policy shifts were impacting WNC nonprofits at the time of the survey in May-June 2025.



54% of nonprofits have made a change to finances, programs, or staffing.



97% of nonprofits have avoided layoffs so far, but leaders see potential for deeper cuts if conditions persist.



Financial changes are most common, impacting 46% of nonprofits.



Leaders report high levels of fear, stress, and uncertainty in the communities they serve.

What Nonprofits Need Now

45% of leaders say their organizations do not have enough staff to carry out their work.

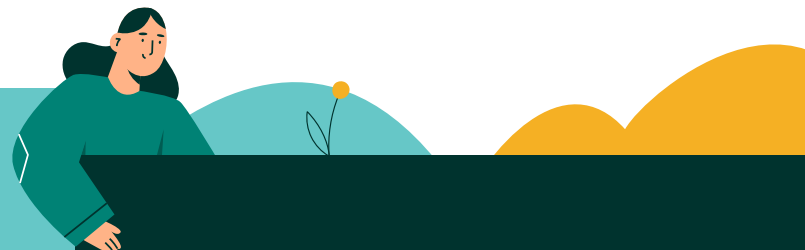


57% of organizations need fundraising support.

74% of leaders say they need support to sustain their commitment.



Nonprofits welcome support beyond funding.



Nonprofits are essential to our region and more important than ever.

Appreciating their leadership and investing in their recovery must be a part of supporting Western North Carolina's future.

dogwood
health trust

www.dogwoodhealthtrust.org

This infographic is adapted from *Rising Above: Resilience and Recovery Among Western North Carolina Nonprofits After Hurricane Helene*, a report written by Openfields for WNC Nonprofit Pathways and Dogwood Health Trust, 2025.